

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /081 W
----- 105855 /17

R 130516Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9480
INFO AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
AMCONSUL SYDNEY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY MANILA
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: AS, PINT
SUBJ: TASMANIAN STATE ELECTIONS

1. PREMIER NEILSON'S LABOR GOVERNMENT WAS RE-ELECTED IN TASMANIA ON DEC. 11. LABOR IS ASSURED OF 18 SEATS IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT, THE LIBERALS 14, WITH 3 SEATS STILL UNDECIDED. GIVEN TASMANIA'S COMPLEX ELECTORAL SYSTEM, FINAL RESULTS WILL PROBABLY NOT BE KNOWN BEFORE NEXT WEEK. LABOR POLLED 52 PCT OF THE VOTE, THE LIBERALS 44 PCT WITH MINOR PARTIES TAKING THE REMAINDER. THIS MARKS A SWING OF ABOUT 10 PCT TO LABOR OVER LAST DECEMBER 13 FEDERAL ELECTION RESULTS.

2. PREDICTABLY, ALP OPPOSITION LEADERS HAVE TERMED THE TASMANIAN RESULTS A REJECTION OF PRIME MINISTER FRASER AND HIS
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GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES. FOR THE RECORD, ACTU PRES-

IDENT BOB HAWKE HAS CALLED FOR FRASER'S RESIGNATION AND
NEW FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

3. LIBERAL LEADERS DENY THAT TASMANIAN ELECTIONS REFLECT
SUBSTANTIAL DISSATISFACTION WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
CLAIMING, WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION, THAT THE ELECTION WAS
DETERMINED LARGELY ON LOCAL ISSUES. THEY ALSO STRESS THAT
TASMANIA HAS BEEN UNDER A LABOR GOVERNMENT SINCE 1934 WITH
THE EXCEPTION OF THE YEARS 196-72. FRASER, CORRECTLY READING
LIKELY RESULTS IN TASMANIA, AND WISHING TO AVOID INVOLVING HIS
OWN PRESTIGE TOO DIRECTLY, SPENT ONLY ONE DAY CAMPAIGNING ON
THE ISLAND. PREMIER NEILSON DELIBERATELY EXCLUDED OPPOSITION
LEADER WHITLAM FROM THE TASMANIAN CAMPAIGN.

4. COMMENT: WHILE WINNING FAIRLY COMFORTABLY, NEILSON WILL
HAVE A LESSENERED PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. HOWEVER, HIS VICTORY
IS HEARTENING TO THE ALP WHICH LOST ALL FIVE SEATS TO THE
LIBERALS IN THE LAST FEDERAL ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH LOCAL
ISSUES WERE PROBABLY PREDOMINANT -- ESPECIALLY UNEMPLOY-
MENT WHICH AT 5.3 PCT IS HIGHER IN TASMANIA THAN ANYWHERE
ELSE IN AUSTRALIA -- MANY POLITICAL OBSERVERS ALSO TEND TO
READ THE TASMANIAN RESULT AS AN EXPRESSION OF DISSATISFAC-
TION OVER THE FRASER GOVERNMENT'S RECENT ECONOMIC PERFOR-
MANCE. END COMMENT.
HARGROVE

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